

Take **NOTICE**

NORTH OLD TOWN INDEPENDENT CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION OF ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

MAY 2020

NOTICE UPDATE:

While COVID-19 prevented the Board from meeting in person, we held a digital meeting on Monday, April 13th and discussed our post-COVID-19 plans.

At our meeting, we reviewed our successful Annual Neighborhood Party (thank you Karen & Trevor for organizing), the City's revised budget proposals, potential local development and our goals for the remainder of 2020.

Once the threat of COVID-19 passes, we are working to host another community/member event to allow everyone to re-connect and break their cabin fever. We will follow national guidance and will not make plans until its safe to come together again.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTY RECAP:

NOTICE hosted its Annual Neighborhood Party and Member Meeting on Thursday, March 5th at The Gables in Old Town North. The party was a wonderful opportunity for our members to connect and socialize over a glass of wine and tasty treats from local businesses *Maillard Therapy* and *From Politics to Pastry*. It also was a success in raising awareness of our organization with 17 new members joining or renewing their memberships. Many Gables residents stopped by on their way home and were also able to learn about NOTICE.

Our guest speaker, Mayor Justin Wilson, filled us in on city happenings, talked briefly about the city budget and took questions from NOTICE members. Several City Council members attended the party to show their support for our neighborhood as well.

Many thanks to The Gables Old Town North for hosting our event in their gorgeous Community Room and to the Old Town North Community Partnership and the Old Town North Alliance for their generous contributions!

INSIGHTS ON SITES:

In order to protect public health, the City has delayed most planning processes and reviews. While new projects are temporarily delayed, construction continues at The Venue (formerly the Crowne Plaza) and Alexan (formerly the WMATA bus barn).

Power Plant Sites:

The proposed substation construction does not indicate “final action on the plan,” but merely a first step to prepare for the Planning process. No Planning process will begin without a buyer.

PEPCO continues preparing the site and maintaining the transmission line infrastructure necessary to the regional power grid.

So, what happens next?

First, PEPCO and GenOn (NRG) will agree on a potential buyer/developer. Second, the buyer/development will meet with the Alexandria Planning Department, NOTICE and other stakeholders. NOTICE might not be the first to hear but we will be at the table early. Third, the City will kick off an 18-month “Coordinated Development District” process, which involves several iterations of site design and configuration.

This process will result in approval of the CDD concept as part of the Old Town North Small Area Plan, followed by any rezoning to CDD and Development Special Use Permits (DSUPs).

What does this mean?

Well, something is happening, but it could be two years before development begins and/or the power plant is torn down. Soil remediation and removal may be necessary.

TransPotomac Plaza:

Community Three, contract purchasers of the three brick office buildings, still plans to pursue the project but has been delayed. The next public meeting of UDAC will be in June.

RENEW YOUR NOTICE MEMBERSHIP:

Have you and your family renewed your NOTICE membership? Our annual year runs November to November. If you didn’t renew at the Annual Meeting or Neighborhood Party, email Vice President, Karen Branding at notice.communications@gmail.com to renew right away!

REPAVING AHEAD:

N. St. Asaph Street, from First Street to Green Street, is slated for [repaving](#) later this month, part of the City’s ongoing effort to repave all City streets and alleys.

SPECIAL COVID-19 RESOURCES:

Prevention and Health Information:

I’m sure that you’ve seen this a million times but just in case:

- [Symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- [Protect Yourself](#)
 - [Alexandria-specific guidance](#)

- [FAQs from the CDC](#)
- [Information on face coverings](#)
 - Baldwin Dry Cleaners, on Fairfax St., is selling fabric masks with a filter pocket
- Alexandria's COVID-19 Hotline: 703.746.4988
 - Open weekdays from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Virginia Department of Health's public information line: 877.ASK.VDH3

Physical and Mental Health Information:

It's no secret that self-isolation can challenge our physical and mental health. We are some quick recommendations for ways to get through and become even better in the future:

- [Food assistance resources](#)
- [NAMI's one-stop shop](#)
- [The power of trees in supporting our mental health](#)
- [SilverSneaker's 7-minute yoga for older adults](#)
- [Coping with fear, anxiety and uncertainty](#)
- [The Arts – at home](#)
- [Visit, while social distancing, any of Alexandria's 265 historical markers](#)

Economic Health Information:

COVID-19 has created a number of economic challenges for families and businesses. We hope these resources are helpful:

- [IRS Direct Payment Information](#)
- [SBA COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Virginia Small Business COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [Alexandria Guidance and Support for Small Businesses](#)

Support Our Community:

- [Alexandria restaurants open for delivery or curbside pick-up](#)
 - **North Old Town Restaurants Open for Delivery for Pick-Up:**
 - Yunnan by Potomac,
 - A La Lucia,
 - Extra Perks,
 - Haute Dogs,
 - Royal Café,
 - Sunday in Saigon,
 - Yagut St and
 - The Italian Place.
- If you are uncomfortable with delivery or pick-up, consider purchasing a gift card to help our local restaurants with their immediate cash flow
- [The North Old Town Farmers' Market is still open. Be sure and check their website/Facebook page for potentially limited hours.](#)
- The Carpenter Shelter is in need of meal prep volunteers to prepare food for 35-40 adult clients per meal. NOTICE has made a donation to support the cause.

- If you can help by preparing a meal, contact Volunteer Coordinator Jamila Smith - jamilasmith@carpentersshelter.org

Show Support for Our First Responders & Frontline Healthcare Workers

- Alexandria House is leading our neighborhood in a daily salute to our doctors, nurses, technicians, ambulance drivers and medical support teams working so hard for us during this pandemic. **At 7pm each day, join Alexandria House residents in making noises for one minute from their balconies to show your support.**

CENSUS 2020:

Have you completed the [2020 Census](#)? For every person not counted, our community loses nearly \$1,500 each year for the next ten years. If a family of four goes uncounted, that's nearly \$50,000 in lost federal resources over the next decade. Learn more about the local impact of the Census on Alexandria [here](#).

Be sure and get counted. In 2010, North Old Town represented just under two percent of the City's population. Any guess how much more we represent in 2020?

HISTORY CORNER:

The WMATA North Royal Street Bus Barn has been torn down and rental apartments will soon replace it. But what was it before it was the Bus Barn? To mark the demolition of community reference point, we're reprinting this article from Mike Kenny, Treasurer; edited by long-term newsletter editor and Board Member, Penny LaPorte.

The site, bounded by Wythe Street to the north, North Royal Street to the east, Pendleton Street to the south and North Pitt Street to the west, was first mapped by the Sanborn Map Company in 1912. At that time, there was a row of eight two-story frame rowhouses on the west side of the block, along North Pitt Street, about two blocks from the R. Portner Brewery along N. St. Asaph Street which closed in 1916. By 1921, the number of homes had grown to include eight two-story frame rowhouses with accessory structures on the south side of the block, along Pendleton Street. The block remained largely consistent in the 1941 Map. In 1940, the US Census listed about 18 households living on N. Pendleton and N. Pitt Streets on this block. These were all listed as "negro" families. Most were working as laborers and maids, were US born, and rented their homes. John Newman, also a "negro", was a self-employed bricklayer. He and his wife Elizabeth and their nine children lived in the only house in the neighborhood owned by its occupants. By 1945, these families and residential houses were replaced by the existing bus garage covering the entire two-acre block.

REVISED CITY BUDGET:

COVID-19 has halted and altered the City's budget process. NOTICE made our voice heard by sending a letter to City Council outlining a number of key programs that we believe should be protected, despite the challenges created by COVID-19.

We asked the City to prioritize:

1. Ongoing cleanup of debris along the Potomac waterfront from Oronoco Bay Park north, maintenance of trash removal and monitoring of any tree damage and pavement degradation in this area;
2. Implementing “Green Streets” for Second Street during FY21 to mitigate flooding and air pollution;
3. Monitoring noise, truck traffic and dust from several construction sites including the Venue (formerly Crowne Plaza), Alexan (Bus Barn Garage), Sheraton Hotel loading dock and Potomac Electric Power plant site;
4. Tree planting to mitigate flooding and improve air quality throughout the neighborhood;
5. Planned street re-paving projects;
6. Implementing the Old Town North Small Area Plan, particularly historic interpretation and the Arts District, including public art; and
7. Installing signage along the Mt. Vernon Trail reminding bikers to stop at intersections and all path users to pass with sufficient space to maintain safety and health.

AT-4 ROUTE ELIMINATION?

DASH has proposed eliminating the segment of the AT-4 bus route between Braddock Road Metro and City Hall. **This change** is not expected to impact most AT-4 riders but **will impact those living in North Old Town** as the route would terminate at Braddock Road Metro, instead of City Hall. The AT-8 would provide alternative service along this route.

If you are an impacted AT-4 rider or have general questions or comments, please contact the NOTICE Board at notice.communications@gmail.com. We are currently evaluating submitting comments to City Council and the DASH Board on this proposal.

The 2019-2020 NOTICE Board:

Mary Harris, *President*

Karen Branding, *Vice President*

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Have suggestions, comments, recommendations for Take NOTICE? Email us at notice.communications@gmail.com.